

WADE H. MASSIE TELLS OF COMMISSION'S WORK

Every Section of State Visited.
Find Varying Conditions Relative to Roads.

MARKERS FOR HIGHWAYS

One Hundred Traffic Officers on Duty and Traffic Regulations for Protection of Roads and Public Aro in Effect.

Addressing the Virginia Good Roads Association in convention at Roanoke last January, Wade H. Massie, chairman of the State Highway Commission, spoke on the work that commission had accomplished. He said in part:

The subject assigned to me is no longer a new one. In discussing this subject at our last annual meeting, I tried to explain to you the duties imposed upon the Highway Commission and the law governing our work. Now I suppose you are more interested in knowing just what we have done, what we have accomplished. Immediately after we organized the commission, the State Highway Commissioner presented us with his allocation of the funds available for the years 1920 and 1921. As the law provides, we called a public hearing to discuss this important question, this hearing was held in the Senate Chamber of the Capitol, was largely attended, and discussed by interested citizens from every section of the State. And while we have more money to spend for road construction than ever before in the history of the State, we were not able to connect up as many of the gaps and provide through roads across the State both north, south, east and west as we would like to have done.

We hope for better things at our next allocation, which will be made immediately after the next Legislature puts into effect the voice of the people in the November election, namely the bond issue.

Visit All Sections of State.

The State Highway Commission is composed of five members, one from each of the five grand divisions of the State. When we were appointed we were familiar with the roads and conditions in our own immediate section, but none of us were familiar with the varying conditions of the whole system. We find every variety of soil, from the sands of the Eastern Shore, the red clay hills of Middle Virginia to the mountains and limestone of the Valley and the Southwest. We also find every variety of road, from soil and sand clay to gravel, macadam and concrete. In order to familiarize and inform ourselves with the varying conditions, and in order to give the citizens of the State an opportunity to present their claims and troubles to us in their own towns and communities, we have visited many sections of the State. One of the first trips of any length was over No. 9, from Richmond through Charlottesville to Staunton, thence over No. 3 to Lexington and Roanoke where we were met by a delegation, many of whose faces, I see, are familiar in this audience. Thence over No. 10 to Pulaski where a large gathering greeted us and where a delegation from Hillsville was waiting to take us to Hillsville and Galax. Large and enthusiastic meetings were held at both of these towns. Thence to Wytheville for a road meeting, where we met the people of Wythe and a large delegation from Bland County; on over No. 10 through Marion and Abingdon to Bristol, where we were met by Henry "Good Roads" Roberts and a number of good roads boosters, thence to Gate City, Jonesville and to Cumberland Gap, back by way of Big Stone Gap, through Russell and Tazewell Counties to Graham, Glenlyn, Pearisburg and Blackburg. At all of these places large and enthusiastic road meetings were held, and back to Richmond by way of Roanoke and Lynchburg. We also took trips to the Eastern Shore and to Southside Virginia, besides numerous short trips to various sections of the State.

Maintenance Important.

On these trips we were impressed with the importance of maintaining the roads already built, and to this end we have adopted and put into effect traffic regulations to protect the roads, and for the safety of the traveling public. These regulations have met with some adverse criticism from the owners of large trucks and from lumber men, but have done a lot to protect the roads. We have appointed about 100 traffic officers, in fact the whole Highway Department from maintenance foreman all the way up to the assistant commissioner. Some of these have been very efficient; the first two weeks after this regulation went into effect, one officer in one county sent in several hundred dollars worth of applications for licenses and tags.

The present speed laws are very inadequate, it is impossible to enforce them, there is hardly an automobilist

that does not violate them every time he gets on a piece of improved road. The limit on straight stretches should be raised to thirty miles an hour, then we could enforce it.

The commission would like to see the State system adequately marked with danger signals and direction markers. Sometime ago we contracted with a firm to erect flash signals on some of the highways. These work on the same principle as the acetylene buoy, a light flashes every second or two, and is very catching, especially at night. These signals are erected without cost to the State, the firm erecting them have the right to place such advertising matter on their base as will be approved by the commission. But as it will be impossible to erect these on all the roads, I am very much in favor of marking all the State system with appropriate markers and all of the same type.

Under an act of the Legislature passed at the last session allowing counties, cities, towns and corporations or individuals to loan money to the State, to be returned by the State without interest, for the construction or reconstruction of any section of the State highway system, we have signed contracts for something like \$1,500,000, to be spent by the commissioner in building certain sections of the highway system, the money to be returned as it is appropriated by the Legislature, and would be allocated to that project, and we have applications for nearly as much more.

The commission has had several contests to settle as to the location of the State Highway system, between towns named in the act of 1918. These hearings have always been held in the most convenient public place to the roads in question after the commission had gone and viewed the different routes.

Will Suggest Financial Plan.

We have had quite a number of applications to view and recommend to the next Legislature additions to the present system. We have not taken up any of these as yet, but hope to be able to take that up this summer and fall, and make such recommendations to the Legislature as will round out the system, and be to the best interests of the State. In this recommendation to the Governor, we also propose to suggest a financial plan to put the State on a broad road building program for the next few years, so we will no longer feel ashamed of old Virginia's roads as compared with our sister States.

The State Highway Commission asks the hearty co-operation not only of the Virginia Good Roads Association, but of every citizen of the State in this work. We can only construct these roads so soon as you or your representatives furnish the means for their construction.

PENNSYLVANIA WIDENS MAIN THOROUGHFARES

Keystone State Highway Department Plans to Make Some Roads 120 Feet Wide.

At the instance of the highway department of the State, the Pennsylvania General Assembly has enacted legislation giving the department power to increase the width of important thoroughfares where it is deemed necessary.

For two years the department has been studying traffic conditions on highways leading to important municipalities in Pennsylvania, and it expects eventually to increase the width of many, although little if any actual work of this kind will be done immediately. Width will be established, however, in much the same way that municipalities establish building lines along undeveloped streets.

The Pennsylvania department hopes by this procedure to save the enormous expenditure which necessarily will be entailed in widening arterial roadways after improvements have been completed. The department is looking ahead fifteen or twenty years, and expects ultimately to widen a number of the arterial thoroughfares to the 120-foot width which the Legislature has authorized.

Eventually it will be necessary to build thoroughfares skirting the larger municipalities and wide enough to accommodate several streams of traffic going in each direction.

Within a few years it will be unwise, it is declared, to send heavy trans-Pennsylvania traffic into Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, inasmuch as additional traffic will add to the congestion of the downtown districts. Consequently, wide roads must be provided around the cities so traffic may be accommodated.

Big Road Program in New Mexico.

The State highway commission in New Mexico has launched a big road-building program, with six new Federal-aid projects, one to cost \$46,707.02, a second to cost \$65,505.67, a third \$58,362.87, the fourth \$41,624.73, a fifth \$69,844.49, and the sixth \$74,194.47.

REALLY GOOD SCHOOLS DEPEND UPON HIGHWAYS

Mrs. B. B. Munford Points to the Value of Good Roads to Women, Homes and Schools.

That really good schools in the rural sections depend upon easy access, and pointing out the value of good roads to the women to the homes, and to community life, Mrs. B. B. Munford addressed the Virginia Good Roads Association at a banquet in Roanoke last January, upon the subject, "The Woman's Point of View as to the Highways." In part, Mrs. Munford said:

"When Mr. Coleman did me the honor to ask me to say a few words at the banquet this evening, I asked him what he wanted me to talk about. He replied, 'What we want is the woman's point of view.' 'Point of view about what,' I said, 'Man or roads?' Now, we women cannot help but be impressed by the very rapid growth in interest on the part of men's organizations in the woman's point of view. We have long been accustomed to your interest in the individual man, but now our views are sought on man in general, and the various problems of State and nation upon whose wise solution his welfare and happiness seem to depend. If I were called upon to give in a nutshell what seems most characteristic of the woman's point of view, I should say that her point of view, whether of a man or a road, is a very human point of view. Some of our Virginia men have been troubled lest this new means just granted us of registering our point of view deprive us of this human thing. If there be such present, I want to reassure them and to tell them not to worry—we couldn't lose it if we would, and we wouldn't lose it if we could!"

Women Close to Sources of Life.

"Women are closer to the sources of life than men, our contact with young children and our position as makers of the home all tend to make the human aspect of every subject the one that most quickly stirs our imagination and arrests most vividly our interest. And this brings me to the topic which General Vaughan wrote me a few days since was to be my subject this evening, 'Good Roads and the Home.' Some one has said, 'We must see everything in terms of human beings'; we cannot be content to see any work as an end in itself, we must needs see it in terms of the men, women and children for whose sake the work exists and who alone give it meaning and a content of feeling. The approach from the home will give such an outlook upon the project of good roads. Since woman is the heart of the home, it might be well to inquire what it is that is causing increasing restlessness among our women in the country, so that they not only acquiesce in a plan, but in increasing numbers persuade their men folk to go to the city. Is not this dissatisfaction largely due to the isolation and drudgery of their lives, and because the schools, the health conditions and the opportunities for wholesome recreation in the country are often not such as to meet what they think necessary for their children's welfare?"

"I need not dwell upon the truth that really good schools will never be possible until sufficiently large numbers of children living over a measurably wide area are able to attend them without undue loss of time, fatigue and exposure to weather, and that proper health conditions depend upon the ability of the county health officer, the country doctor and the public health nurse to move about freely and with dispatch. I heard recently of a county health officer in one of the prosperous and beautiful sections of the State who had temporarily stopped his health work and was giving all his time to the work for good roads, feeling that in so doing he could best contribute to bettering health conditions. Social life and community recreation depend also upon the opportunity to come and go with measurable comfort and convenience. And thus we are forced to admit that a thoroughly satisfying home life is not possible in many sections of rural Virginia."

Good Roads Important to City Women.

"Good roads are important also to the home of the city woman. What would it not mean if we might have such roads as would enable farmers to bring from a considerable distance their produce in auto trucks to our doors, thus assuring them better prices and we as consumers lower figures in cost? Such a plan would also reduce (certainly in our cities of medium size) the risk of a milk or food famine in the event of any temporary breakdown in our transportation system."

"A wise man wrote, 'The measure of a civilization is its ability to create and foster human and spiritual contacts.' The single home can never produce such a civilization. If such a type of society is to come to pass, we must have as its basis such roads as will permit the people in these home to at least get together and know each other. Somehow the idea of an adequate system of roads takes on the pictorial form of a page in

our school physiology, where the figure of a man is printed and his arterial system outlined in red ink. First, the big trunk arteries and then the tiny blood vessels running to the very finger tips, relating every portion of the body to every other, and carrying in the blood new life to the farthest extremity. But such a picture of Virginia roads would suggest that arterio sclerosis had set in, not even as a disease of old age, but attacking us in our early youth. A Y. W. C. A. worker said recently in a conference, 'We need both a vision and a program. . . . If we have only a vision, then we are visionaries; if we have only a program we are mechanics, but with a vision and a program we are conquerors.'

"With the vision in our hearts of a complete life for the men, women and little children, and such a program as has been developed by our State Highway Department and this association, should we not expect to conquer Virginia for the good roads movement?"

"Some twenty years ago a fresh and insistent impulse was abroad in Virginia for the more rapid rebuilding of this old Commonwealth. In these twenty years we have marvelously prospered in influence and industry. That movement was manifest at first most markedly in the development of our educational system. Then followed the creation of our Department of Health, with all that has meant in the saving in life and suffering, and later the Highway Department and the growing interest in, and conviction of the necessity for good roads. As we think of this old State of ours as she relates herself to industry, to schools, to health and better roads, may I suggest the toast taken from the work of one of our Virginia authors, Mr. James Branch Cabell:

"To this New South—For to her all former glories are less a jewel than a touchstone, and with her portion of it daily she appraises her own doing, and without vain speech. And her high past she values now in chief as its foundation of that edifice whereon she labors day by day and with augmenting strokes."

"Because this toast is given under conditions less onerous, perhaps, to us than to the gentlemen, may we not make it a spiritual toast in which we pledge ourselves anew in all our work, to make it worthy of the men ment have made Virginia great!"

ACCIDENTS IN MARYLAND ON THE STRAIGHT ROADS

Contrary to general belief, more accidents occur on straight highway stretches than at curves or road intersections, according to Harry D. Williar, assistant chief engineer of the Maryland State Roads Commission. During the past two months Mr. Williar has been keeping a record of highway accidents in his State, and he says that a majority of the accidents are due to speeding, failing to give right of way and bad driving. Sixteen accidents occurred on the Baltimore-Fredrick Highway, the straightest and perhaps the most widely used road in Maryland, and four of them were fatal. "It seems to be the weakness of a motorist," said Mr. Williar, "to hit her up on a straight stretch of roadway. On roads where there are curves there is a disposition to be more careful."

Sixty-seven accidents occurred on Maryland highways during the past two months, fourteen persons being killed and thirty-three injured. Mr. Williar attributes the causes to faulty driving, violations of the law, failure to heed warnings, speeding, driving on the wrong side of the road and attempts to pass other cars or trucks. Mr. Williar's investigations, as have many others, refutes the oft-repeated contention that most accidents on smooth, hard-surface roads are due to skidding.

\$7,366,314.20 SPENT IN TEXAS FOR 1,106.1 MILES

According to a tabulated statement by the Texas State Highway Department 139 new road projects have been completed involving 1,106.1 miles at a total cost of \$7,366,314.20, on which \$1,312,258.85 State aid and \$1,794,335.14 Federal aid was paid. Of these roads 32.4 miles were paved with concrete, 142.5 miles with bituminous materials and 607 miles with gravel. There are now under construction 192 projects involving 2,300.8 miles at a total cost of \$26,955,348.03, and upon which sums of \$9,260,986.09 as Federal aid and \$2,296,217.61 as State aid have been granted.

Of these projects, 83.7 miles are paved with concrete and 421 miles with bituminous materials. Seventeen other projects totaling 144.2 miles are not yet under contract. Ten additional contemplated projects are not yet approved, while sixty-five more have been approved for Federal aid to the extent of \$2,697,078.84, and State aid to the amount of \$1,208,740.52.

Motor Vehicles in Holland.

Holland has 10,000 motor vehicles, or only one car to every 700 inhabitants. The United States has 10,000,000 motor cars, trucks and motorcycles, or one to every eleven inhabitants.